

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE REGULATIONS
Title 3, California Code of Regulations
Section 3406(b), Mediterranean Fruit Fly Interior Quarantine
INITIAL STATEMENT OF REASONS/
POLICY STATEMENT OVERVIEW

Description of the Public Problem, Administrative Requirement, or Other Condition or Circumstance the Regulation is Intended to Address

These regulations are intended to address the obligation of the Secretary of Food and Agriculture to protect the agricultural industry of California from the movement and spread within California of injurious plant pests.

Specific Purpose and Factual Basis

The specific purpose of Section 3406(b) is to provide for the State to regulate the movement and possible carriers of Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly) from the area under quarantine to prevent the artificial spread of the Medfly to noninfested areas to protect California's agricultural industry.

The factual basis for the determination by the Department that the emergency amendment of Section 3406(b) was necessary is as follows:

Mediterranean fruit fly is a destructive insect pest which attacks the fruit of various plants including over 150 crops such as citrus, tomatoes, grapes, avocados, peaches, and cherries. The female punctures host fruit to lay eggs which develop into larvae. The punctures admit decay organisms that may cause tissue breakdown. Larval feeding causes breakdown of fruit tissue. Fruits with egg punctures and larval feeding are generally unfit for human consumption. Pupae may be found in fruit, but normally are found in soil.

Adult female Mediterranean fruit flies were detected in the County of San Bernardino. On September 27, 2005, two sexually mature mated female Mediterranean fruit flies were

taken from a trap in the Rancho Cucamonga area of San Bernardino County. One sexually mature mated female Mediterranean fruit fly was determined to be filled with eggs. The detection of adult Mediterranean fruit flies, including a female with eggs, is indicative of an incipient infestation of the fly in the Rancho Cucamonga area of San Bernardino County.

If the fly were allowed to spread and become established in host fruit production areas, California's agricultural industry would suffer losses due to decreased production of marketable fruit, increased pesticide use, and loss of markets if other states or countries enacted quarantines against California products.

The proposed quarantine area for Rancho Cucamonga includes the initial detection sites as the epicenter and a buffer zone which extends approximately 4-1/2 miles in each direction from the epicenter. A buffer zone is necessary because the fly can spread naturally (as well as being spread artificially in infested hosts). The proposed boundary line was drawn jointly by the United States Department of Agriculture, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and the San Bernardino County Agricultural Commissioner. The proposed quarantine area is considered the minimum area around the initial detection sites which should be regulated to prevent artificial spread of Mediterranean fruit fly to noninfested areas.

This emergency amendment established a quarantine area in San Bernardino County of approximately 72 square miles surrounding the Mediterranean fruit fly infestation in the Rancho Cucamonga area of San Bernardino County. To prevent artificial spread of the fly to noninfested areas to protect the California's agricultural industry, it is necessary immediately to regulate movement of hosts which can carry the fly within and from the infested area and surrounding buffer zone. Therefore, it is necessary to amend Section 3406(b) on an emergency basis.

Estimated Cost or Savings to Public Agencies or Affected Private Individuals or Entities

The Department of Food and Agriculture has determined that Section 3406 does not impose a mandate on local agencies or school districts, except that agricultural

commissioners of counties under quarantine have a duty to enforce it. No reimbursement is required under Section 17561 of the Government Code because the Agricultural Commissioner of San Bernardino County requested the change in the regulations.

The Department also has determined that no savings or increased costs to any state agency, no reimbursable costs or savings under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of the Government Code to local agencies or school districts, no nondiscretionary costs or savings to local agencies or school districts, and no costs or savings in federal funding to the State will result from the proposed action.

The Department has determined that the proposed action will not have a significant adverse economic impact on housing costs or California businesses, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states. The Department's determination that this action will not have a significant adverse economic impact on businesses was based on the following:

Within the quarantine area, the Department has identified 23 fruit sellers/vendors. These businesses must maintain quarantine commodities in a manner that precludes exposure to Medfly. Approved safeguards include maintaining the commodities indoors, in coolers, in plastic bags, enclosed behind window screen, or covered with fine mesh or plastic. All of these methods are very inexpensive. These businesses may experience a reduction in sales and reduced shelf life of the commodities. Neither of these reductions would represent a significant economic impact.

There are no known organic growers. The Department has identified approximately 11 conventional growers within the quarantine area. Host fruit from growers outside the core area (a one mile area surrounding the infested sites) may be treated with Malathion or Spinosad bait spray before it can be moved. The Malathion spray costs are approximately \$5 per acre for product with approximately 10 required applications. Spray applications may be made by a commercial applicator or by the growers. Growers routinely spray for

other plant pests so the additional applications would not be a significant expense.

There are no growers located within the core area where the only quarantine treatment options would be cold treatment, fumigation or processing for host material. Host material produced in the core area is considered to be a higher risk due to its proximity to the known infested sites. Fumigation costs are approximately \$0.015 per pound of product. The costs for cold treatment are unknown at this time.

The Department has identified approximately two packers and one processor and it is estimated that the additional costs for each of these businesses may be approximately \$200. Businesses transporting or receiving host produce must maintain the quarantine commodities in a manner that precludes exposure to Medfly. Approved safeguards include maintaining the commodities in refrigerated coolers, in plastic bags, or covered with fine mesh or plastic. All of these methods are very inexpensive.

There are approximately 12 nurseries in the area under quarantine that must treat the soil of host plants and strip the fruit of host plants before they may be moved from or within the area under quarantine. The required treatment is a soil drench with diazinon. This treatment does not have to be repeated if the fruit is kept stripped from the plants. The cost of the treatment is low and existing nursery personnel perform the treatment and fruit stripping. The fruit is placed in plastic bags for landfill disposal. The plastic bags are inexpensive and the extra material for landfill disposal does not add appreciably to their existing disposal costs.

The Department has identified approximately six farmers' markets/swap meets in the area under quarantine. Businesses selling host produce at these locations must maintain the quarantine commodities in a manner that precludes exposure to Medfly. Approved safeguards include maintaining the commodities in coolers, in plastic bags, or covered with fine mesh or plastic. All of these methods are very inexpensive. These businesses may experience a reduction in sales and reduced shelf life of the commodities. Neither of these

reductions would represent a significant economic impact.

No business has gone out of business due to any Medfly quarantine. Many businesses have benefited from the sales of safeguarding materials and others have benefited from Medfly expenditures by State and Federal governments.

Based on the above information, it was determined that the amendment of Section 3406(b) will not have a significant adverse economic impact on businesses. All costs associated with compliance with the regulation are low and, for the most part, a number of optional ways to comply are available to businesses so they may select the means with the lowest cost and easiest implementation for them. For many businesses, no additional costs were incurred.

Assessment

The Department has made an assessment that the amendment to this regulation would not (1) create or eliminate jobs within California, (2) create new business or eliminate existing businesses within California, or (3) affect the expansion of businesses currently doing business within California.

Alternatives Considered

The Department of Food and Agriculture must determine that no alternative considered would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed or would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed action.

Information Relied Upon

The Department is relying upon the following studies, reports, and documents in the adoption of Section 3406(b):

“Annual Estimated Economic Impact-Rancho Cucamonga Area, San Bernardino County, Mediterranean Fruit Fly Interior Quarantine,” dated November 2, 2005, Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services, Permits and Regulations, California Department of Food and Agriculture.

“Establishments Affected by the Mediterranean Fruit Fly Interior Quarantine, Rancho Cucamonga Area, San Bernardino County,” dated November 2, 2005, Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services, Permits and Regulations, California Department of Food and Agriculture.

“Annual Estimated Fruit Fly Quarantine Costs,” dated November 2, 2005, Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services, Permits and Regulations, California Department of Food and Agriculture.

Email dated October 27, 2005, from Muhammad I. Azhar to Nick Condos, “Medfly SBC,” plus its attachment.

Letter dated September 28, 2005, to William Sandrage and Courtney Albrecht, from Edouard P. Layaye, San Bernardino County Agricultural Commissioner.

“Pest and Damage Record #1363141,” dated September 23, 2005, California Department of Food and Agriculture, Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services.

“Mediterranean Fruit Fly, Impact on You,” County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office, California Department of Food and Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, January 2003.